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648 the Acting High Commissioner and the Acting Prime Minister
563 visited Kurdistan together, and made statements in which, while condemning separation and emphasizing the unity of Iraq, they spoke of the Government's resolve to satisfy the linguistic and other demands of the Kurds. On the other hand, a number of conciliatory measures, both legislative and administrative, were taken. The most important of them was the Local Languages Law already mentioned.

[669] In spite of this, revolt once more broke out among the Kurds, first under Shaikh Mahmud (1930–1) and then under Shaikh Ahmad of Barzan (1932). The causes of these revolts were partly political and partly personal. They were only subdued through the intervention of the R.A.F.

The Kurds since the Treaty

563 From 1932 to 1943 the Kurds did not revolt again, but con-
668 tinued to be restless and unwilling to accept the authority of the
648 Government. There were two main reasons for their restlessness. The first was the growth of Kurdish national spirit, due partly to the gradual appearance of a class of educated Kurds, partly to a natural reaction against Pan-Arabism. The encouragement given by the French to Kurdish nationalism in the Syrian Jazirah, and by the Russians to Kurdish autonomy in the Caucasus, may also have had a certain although a limited influence. The second and more fundamental reason was to be found in the particular administrative grievances of the Kurdish tribes. The Iraqi Government made little attempt to carry out the provisions of the various laws passed during the mandatory period. Government departments in Baghdad tended to neglect the claims of districts so far away from the capital; and the Kurds had no way of making their voice heard effectively and compelling the Government to pay attention to their needs. In general, Arab officials in the northern provinces failed to understand the mentality and needs of the Kurdish people (although Kurdish officials in Arab districts were often highly successful). The gap between administration and inhabitants was perhaps greatest in the Mosul liwa, where the administration was largely under the influence of the Arab townspeople of Mosul itself.

563 The Government's neglect showed itself in every sphere.
668 There were few facilities for education, and those which existed
511 were mainly for education in Arabic. Again, nothing was done

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to accept their stay in Iraq as more than temporary. Secondly, even if they had to remain in Iraq, they wished to go on living the same sort of independent life under the Mar Shimun as they had lived before the war. They were not satisfied with the privileges which they shared with other minorities; they claimed complete autonomy, and their claims were expressed in the most intransigent form by the Mar Shimun himself. Finally, they distrusted the Iraqi Government, and regarded themselves as in a special way the protégés of the British Government; when the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 was signed, they thought themselves to have been abandoned by their protectors, and feared the worst. Their fears were intensified by the work among them of a small group of agitators.

Nor was the Iraqi Government more satisfied with the situation. It resented the special position accorded to the Assyrians, no less than the refusal of the Assyrians to be contented with their position as citizens of Iraq. What is more important, it feared them. Throughout the mandatory period, Assyrian Levies had been trained and used by the British authorities for guarding aerodromes as well as for the repression of the Kurdish revolts. They had proved to be good soldiers; both they and the Iraqis believed that they would be more than a match for the young Iraqi Army. After 1930 they were gradually disbanded, but they retained their arms, and the Iraqi Government feared that in view of the prevailing discontent among the Assyrians they might revolt and the revolt would be difficult to crush; it feared also that the British Government might instigate a revolt, as an excuse for recovering control over the country.

By the summer of 1933 tension between the Assyrians and the Government was very great. Although some of the former were willing to come to terms with the Government, others, the foremost among them being the Mar Shimun, were still demanding autonomy; and asked, if this was not possible, to be allowed to cross the frontier into Syria. Relations between the Mar Shimun and the Government had reached such a state that he was not allowed to return from Baghdad to the north. The Government and the Army were becoming increasingly frightened of the possibility of a revolt, and resolved, if given an opportunity, to end the danger once and for all. King Faisal and several of the more experienced Ministers were away in Europe, and the

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563 Ministers left in Iraq were too weak or disinclined to resist the
641 extremism of the Army and of public opinion.
669 At this moment, in June, a group of Assyrians decided to take matters into their own hands and cross the Tigris into Syria. On the other side of the river they were disarmed by the French authorities; but later their arms were returned to them and many of them crossed back into Iraq. There they met a detachment of the Iraqi Army; fighting broke out (it cannot be established who began it), and both sides suffered casualties. When the news of this incident spread through Iraq, Government, Army and public alike were seized with mass hysteria; the action of the Assyrians was considered as the beginning of a revolt, and it was resolved to take decisive action. The Army organized and carried out a series of massacres in which some hundreds of Assyrians were killed.

These massacres, and the fear of further ones, completely broke the spirit of the Assyrians. Some 6,000 of them crossed over into the Upper Khabur region in Syria, and about 15,000 others subsequently expressed their desire to leave Iraq. The Council of the League of Nations set up a special committee to deal with the question of settling them. After several proposals for their settlement in Brazil, in British Guiana and in the Orontes Valley in Syria had been considered and rejected, it was finally decided that those already in Syria should be permanently settled in the Upper Khabur Valley in the Jazirah, while the remainder should stay in Iraq.

563 The situation of the Assyrians in the Khabur Settlement has already been discussed. Of those who remained in Iraq or have returned to it, some are still in their old homes round Amadia and Ruwanduz; some have settled down again in villages around Mosul; others are working in the big towns. A British Commission appointed by the Iraqi Government reported in 1938 that their economic position in the northern plains was at least as good as that of the other inhabitants. No further incidents have occurred; the Assyrians are no longer disposed to be intransigent, and the Government is no longer obsessed by the idea that they are dangerous. It is not impossible, however, that a dangerous situation will once more arise. During the recent war a very large proportion of the Assyrian men were enrolled in the R.A.F. levies or were working for Great Britain in other ways. It was calculated that 75 per cent of them were